DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 372 887 RC 019 700

AUTHOR Monsivais, George I.
TITLE Latino Teachers: Well Educated but Not Prepared. An Executive Summary.
INSTITUTION Tomas Rivera Center, Claremont, CA.
SPONS AGENCY Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 6p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Hispanic Americans; *Mexican American Education; Mexican Americans; Minority Group Teachers; Surveys; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Education; *Teacher Expectations of Students; Teacher Persistence; Teacher Response; *Teaching Conditions
IDENTIFIERS *Latinos

ABSTRACT

This report summarizes perceptions of Latino teachers concerning their professional preparation, their working environment, and school/community characteristics that affect the achievement and attainment of Latino students. A mailing of 1,252 survey questionnaires to members of the Association of Mexican American Educators was conducted. Of the 438 respondents, 156 were Latino teachers. Respondents were mostly women (77 percent), principally bilingual, had an average of 11 years teaching experience, and generally taught at the K-6 level. Fifty-five percent had earned master's degrees or credits beyond the master's level. Most teachers taught at schools that are considered "low wealth," and the majority viewed overcrowded classes as a moderate or serious problem at their schools. Sixty-two percent of respondents indicated that financial cost was a major barrier to Latinos pursuing teaching careers, along with insufficient individualized faculty counseling and poor preparation for testing requirements. Of those respondents working at the K-6 level, only 41 percent felt they were well prepared to teach Latino students and only 34 percent felt well prepared to teach limited-English-proficient students. As a group, respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with their jobs. However, 65 percent indicated that fellow teachers had lower expectations of Latino students than of White students, and 53 percent felt that they were typecast into activities related to their ethnicity and that these activities increased their workload beyond that of the average teacher. As a result, 51 percent of respondents plan to leave classroom teaching within the next 5 years, and half of those leaving the classroom plan on leaving education altogether. (LP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 372 887

LATINO TEACHERS:

WELL EDUCATED BUT NOT PREPARED

by George I. Monsivais

The Tomás Rivera Center: An Executive Summary

Fall 1990

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Morgan Appel

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Tomás Rivera Center: *An Executive Summary*

LatinoTeachers:
Well Educated But Not Prepared

by George I. Monsivais

Fall 1990

Policy Issue: The Attrition of Latino Teachers

The changing demographics of the Southwest call attention to two significant trends:

- The number of public school K-12 students is growing and will continue to grow over the next decade.
- The majority of these students will represent Latino and other ethnic minority groups.

These trends have emphasized the need to address a projected shortage of teachers and to recognize the severe under-representation of Latino and other minority teachers. Aside from issues related to equity, a growing body of literature suggests the need for cultural fit or synchronization between students and teachers. This need, which involves a match of social and economic status as well as ethnic culture and language, is especially critical in regard to students identified as being "at risk."

In response to this need, The Tomás Rivera Center has conducted a series of studies aimed at improving policy and practices related to the recruitment of Latino teachers. A critical aspect of this policy initiative was the examination of Latino teachers' perceptions concerning their professional preparation, their working environment, and those school/community characteristics that affect the achievement and attainment of Latino students.

Although a variety of studies have contributed to a better understanding of our nation's teachers (i.e., studies by Metropolitan Life and the Center for Education Statistics), these studies have provided little information on Latino teachers. Two factors account for this: the small number of Latino teachers within the sample groups of most national studies; and the fact that most studies ignore issues specifically relevant to Latino teachers.

To correct this, The Tomás Rivera Center conducted a pilot study of Latino teachers in the spring of 1989. This study used a survey instrument that addressed issues of national interest and responded to the particular concerns of Latino teachers working with Latino students.

REPORTED IN THIS SUMMARY:

Only 41% of the Latino Teachers surveyed replied that they felt well prepared to teach Latino students.

Only 34% felt well prepared to teach "limited English proficient" (LEP) students.

Survey of AMAE Members:

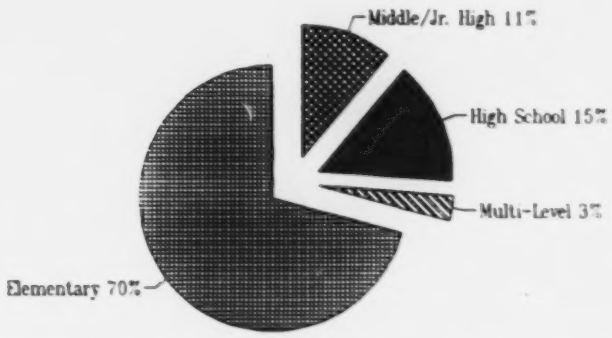
To begin gathering data on Latino teachers, a survey instrument was mailed to 1,252 members of the Association of Mexican American Educators (AMAE) in the spring of 1989. Four hundred and thirty-eight surveys were returned, representing a 34% return rate with a sampling error of +- 4%. The returned surveys included 25 uncodeable returns, 96 non K-12 educators, 19 non-Latino administrators, 31 non-Latino teachers, 111 Latino administrators, and 156 Latino teachers. The responses of these Latino teachers are our primary interest.

RC 019700

Latino Teacher Profile:

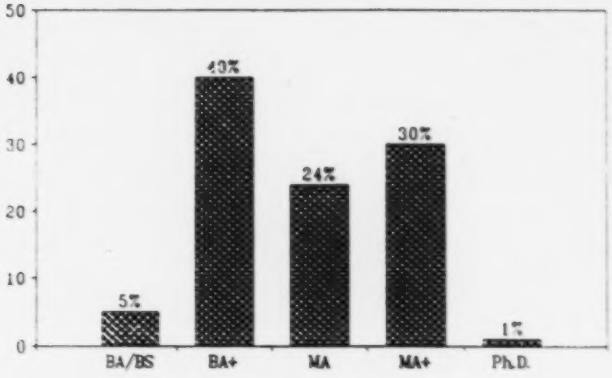
The Latino teacher respondents to the pilot survey were mostly women (77%), principally bilingual (73%), had an average of 11 years teaching experience, and generally taught at the K-6 level (70%). They were unusually well

Level of Teaching



educated; 55% had earned Master's degrees or credits beyond the master's level.

Educational Background

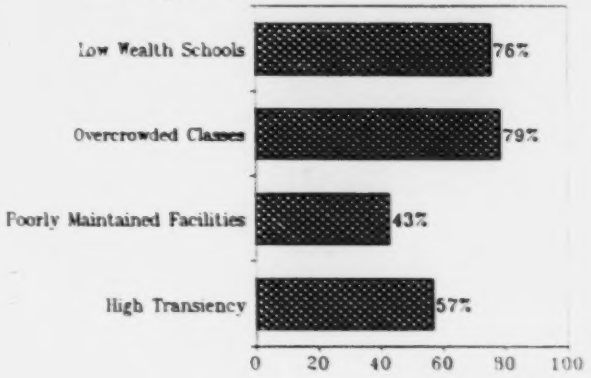


Work Environment:

The work environment described by the respondents was generally less than ideal:

- Seventy-six percent (76%) indicated that for purposes of receiving state aid, their schools were considered "low wealth."
- Seventy-nine percent (79%) considered "overcrowded classes" to be a moderate or serious problem at their schools.

Perception of School Environment

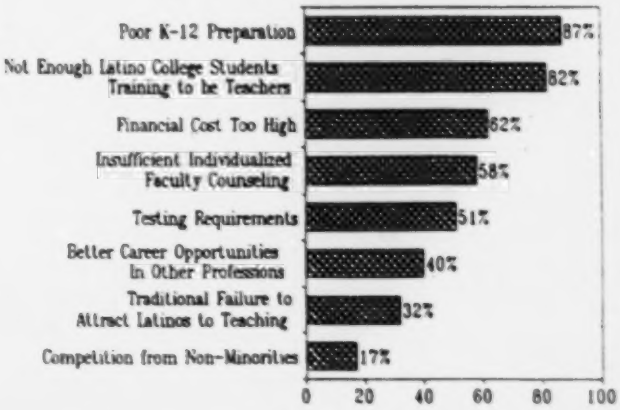


Barriers to new Latino Teachers:

The K-12 teachers surveyed clearly made it through the system. They are best described, however, as survivors rather than products of the system.

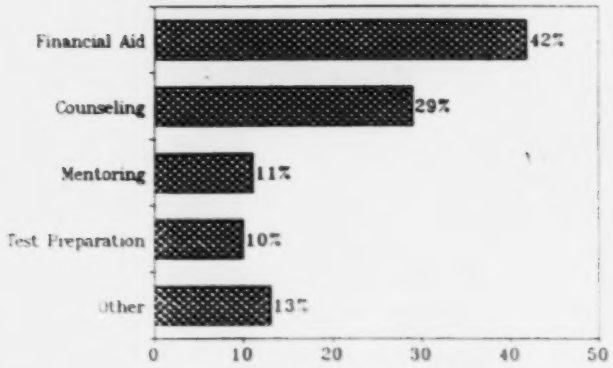
- Whereas 62% of the respondents indicated that "financial cost" was a major barrier to Latino's pursuing teaching careers, only 42% indicated they had received financial aid.

Barriers to Latinos Pursuing Teaching Careers



- Whereas 58% responded that insufficient individualized faculty counseling was a major barrier, only 29% received aid in the form of counseling, and only 11% received aid in the form of mentoring.

Types of Assistance Received



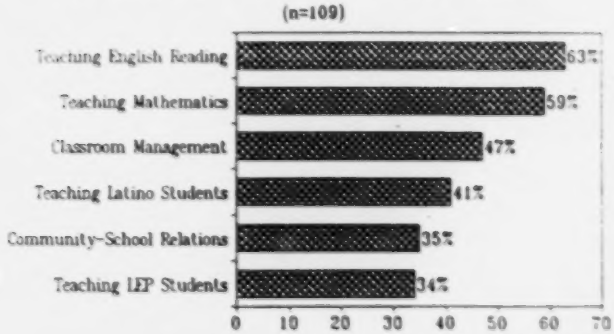
- Whereas 51% indicated that testing requirements were a major barrier, only 10% indicated that they had received aid in the form of test preparation.

Latino Teachers Feel Unprepared to Work with Latino Students:

Of those respondents working at the K-6 level,

- Sixty-three percent (63%) felt they had been well prepared to teach English reading.

Elementary Teachers who said that their Preparation was Good or Excellent



- Fifty-nine percent (59%) felt they were well prepared to teach Math.

In contrast, however,

- Only 41% replied that they felt well prepared to teach Latino students.
- Only 34% felt well prepared to teach "limited English proficient" (LEP) students.

If we include junior high and senior high teachers, 34% of the Latino teachers felt well prepared to teach Latino students and only 27% felt well prepared to teach LEP students. These figures raise some concern, given that more than 78% of the respondents reported working in bilingual or ESL programs.

As a group, the respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with their jobs (81%); 64% indicated that they would become teachers if they had to do it over again.

Several underlying issues must be addressed, however.

- Sixty-five percent (65%) of the respondents indicated that fellow teachers have lower expectations of Latino students than of Anglo students.
- Fifty-three percent (53%) of the sample felt that they were typecast into activities related to their ethnicity and that these activities increased their workload beyond that of the average teacher.

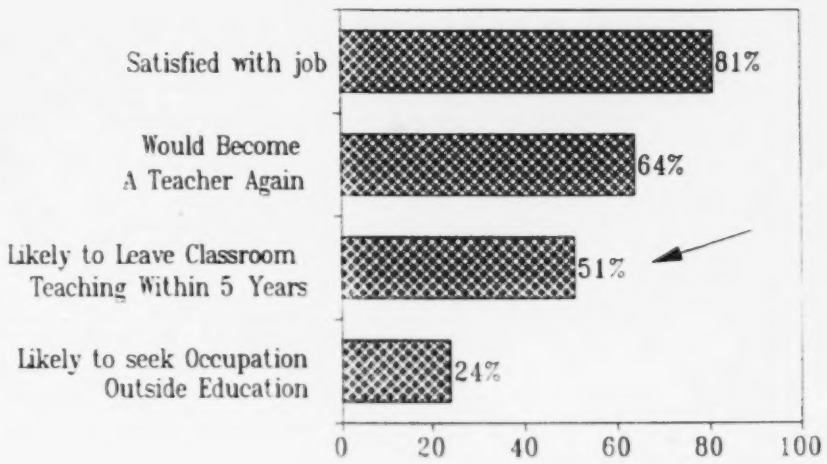
cont.

This project was undertaken by Raymond E. Castro, Maura Harrington, Reynaldo F. Macías, George I. Monsivais, and Pamela Wright with a grant from The Ford Foundation.

Additional copies of this executive summary are available from The Tomás Rivera Center (714) 625-6607

In great part, due to their feelings of being typecast into activities related to their ethnicity, the perception that fellow teachers have lower expectations of Latino students than of Anglo students, and their sense of inadequate preparation to work with Latino students, 51% of the respondents indicated that they plan to leave classroom teaching within the next five years. Of those leaving the classroom, half plan on leaving education altogether.

Degree of Satisfaction and Commitment to Teaching



The Tomás Rivera Center
A National Center for Policy Studies

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Claremont, CA
Permit No. 801

710 No. College Avenue Claremont California (714) 625-6607
715 Stadium Drive, San Antonio, Texas 87284 (512) 736-8376